

ORIGINAL AND SUGGESTED
RESOLUTIONS 151

oil with those of other enterprises :
in this case

I have formed an original decision.

Resolutions that are suggested are formed very easily indeed. But an effort is required to make up our minds when there is no assisting suggestion.

The effort may be accompanied by a good deal of mental perturbation. Many of us have experienced the annoying perplexity that may be occasioned by the necessity of making a spontaneous choice—it may be in the purchase of a necktie or a wedding present : we should feel thankful were there only one article in stock which could possibly be selected, and we hail with relief any suggestion the shopman may make to help us to a conclusion. We are sometimes even impelled to go by the chance result of a toss up. To most men life would be unendurable did it require them very frequently to form conclusions by spontaneous judgment : they are content to be led by habit or suggestion.

When we act upon a suggested resolution we cannot, of course, claim to have exercised spontaneity or free will. There is a large and influential school of thought which denies that our behaviour is at any time spontaneous, asserting that resolutions which bear all the appearance of originality are in reality forced upon us and merely give effect to suggestions that can be detected if we cast our eyes backward

in search
of them. My determination to rise early
was the
outcome of a casual glance at an
almanac my
preference for oil sharfes was
prompted by a
remark which I chanced to overhear in
a railway
carriage. It is impossible to disprove
this theory.
The action of our brains is limited by
experience
it is compelled to mould itself upon the
past, and